

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05

NSCE-00 /048 W

----- 005233

O R 271340Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8645

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

USIA WASHDC

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STATE FOR CU/ARTS, INFO: CU/EE, EUR/SOV; GENEVA FOR CSCE/
CORIDEN; LENINGRAD FOR P&C; VUSIA FOR IEE

E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC UR

SUBJ: CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS (CU/ARTS): DRAMA GROUP FOR 1975

REF: (A) STATE 62306 (B) MOSCOW 2940

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED WITH APPRECIATION TEXT OF PLAYS
UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION FOR A.C. T. TOUR. WE
FURTHER REQUEST THREE COPIES OF ACTING TEXTS OF FINAL TWO
PLAYS WHEN DECIDED UPON FOR EARLY TRANSLATION INTO
RUSSIAN TO FACILITATE TRANSLATION. CARGE I.D. #37-UR-75-
0281.

2. HAVING READ "MATCHMAKER," EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS
THIS PLAY NOT RPT NOT BE INCLUDED IN TOP TWO PLAYS FOR
SOVIET TOUR. BELIEVE SOVIET AUDIENCES WOULD NOT RELATE
TO SHOPKEEPER MILIEU OF 1880'S, THAT DATED FLAVOR OF
PLAY WOULD FURTHER ACCENTUATE ABSENCE OF CONTEMPORARY
PLAY FROM PROGRAM, AND THE SECOND PLAY BY WILDER AMONG
FOUR BROUGHT TO USSR BY EXCHANGE PROGRAM WOULD SEEM
OUR OF PROPORTION WITHOUT VERY STRONG JUSTIFICATION,
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SINCE "MATCHMAKER" NOT AMONG WILDER'S STRONGEST PLAYS.

3. EMBASSY IN MEANTIME INFORMED GOSKONTSERT/MINCULT/MFA BY LETTER OF DEPARTMENT'S FORMAL NOMINATION OF A.C.T. FOR FOUR-WEEK TOUR DURING TIME PERIOD IN REFTEL (A). OTHER RELEVANT DETAILS IN REFTEL INCLUDED IN THIS LETTER. LETTER ALSO STATED QUOTE THE AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATRE IS PREPARED TO PRESENT PERFORMANCES OF O'NEILL'S "DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS" AND ONE OTHER AMERICAN PLAY UNQUOTE.

4. EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT CONTEMPORARY PLAY VITAL FOR TOUR AND SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN FINAL PAIR OF PLAYS, AND WE RECOMMEND DEPT/ACT CONTINUE EXPLORE SUITABLE CONTEMPORARY PLAYS. RE PARA. 10, REFTEL (A): WE BELIEVE THERE IS SOMETHING VERY POSTIVE ABOUT PRESENTING IN THE USSR AT THIS TIME AN HONEST AMERICAN PLAY ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ISSUES (SO LONG AS PLAY IS ALOS HIGH-QUALITY THEATER OF COURSE). AMONG THINKING PEOPLE IN CULTURAL WORLD HERE TO WHOM WE TALK REGULARLY (MANY OF WHOM ARE DEVOTED LISTENERS TO VOICE OF AMERICA), THERE IS GREAT RESPECT FOR THE STRENGTH IN AMERICAN SOCIETY WHICH ALLOWS IT TO CRITICIZE, EXAMINE AND RENEW ITSELF. THIS FEATURE OF AMERICAN SOCIETY SETS AN EXAMPLE FOR THOSE WHO ASPIRE TO MORE OF THIS QUALITY IN THEIR OWN SOCIETY.

5. IF DEPARTMENT DECIDES IT IMPOSSIBLE FIND SUITABLE CONTEMPORARY PLAY, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS "TIME OF YOUR LIFE" AS SECOND PLAY.

6. GOSKONTSERT (NETTO) INITIAL REACTION TO DRAMA GROUP PROPOSAL WAS THAT TIME WAS SHORT, BUT THEY WILLING EXPLORE ALL ASPECTS OF TOUR ASAP. ADVANCE VISIT AS EARLY AS APRIL TWELVE DID NOT RPT NOT APPEAR REALISTIC TO GOSKONTSERT IN INITIAL DISCUSSION.

7. AT MARCH TWENTY-FIVE MEETING WITH BURROVA, P&C COUNSELOR STRESSED DESIRE OF DEPARTMENT AND ACT THAT ADVANCE VISIT FOR THEATER TOUR TAKE PLACE AS REQUESTED APRIL TWELVE - NINETEEN. MIN CULT SAID SEPTEMBER TOUR, AND CONSEQUENTLY APRIL ADVANCE VISIT, WILL BE DIFFICULT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO SCHEDULE, BECAUSE SEPTEMBER IS MONTH WHEN SOVIET THEATERS BEGIN REGULAR SEASON. FYI WHEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A THEATER PAG CAME UP SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, GOSKONTSERT DID NOT IDENTIFY SEPTEMBER AS DIFFICULT MONTH FOR SCHEDULING PERFORMANCES END FYI.

8. ANOTHER PROBLEM MIN CULT SEES BLOCKING WAY TO AGREEMENT ON DATES OF ACT ADVANCE VISIT IS CHOICE OF

SECOND PLAY. EMBOFF REPLIED WE WOULD BE ABLE TO NAME
SECOND PLAY WITHIN TEN DAYS, BUT IN MEANTIME WE NEED
AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON SCHEDULING ADVANCE TOUR, WHICH
DOES NOT REQUIRE NAMES OF PLAYS. IT WAS POINTED OUT
THAT ACT MUST HIRE ACTORS AND BEGIN REHEARSALS AND OTHER-
WISE PROCEED WITH PREPARATIONS SO SECOND PLAY WILL BE
NAMED VERY SOON AND BOTH WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING
IN MID-SUMMER. ASSURANCE WAS RELUCTANTLY GIVEN BY
BUTROVA THAT CHOICE OF SECOND PLAY COULD BE APPROVED AFTER
READING SCRIPT ("DESIRE" PRESENTS NO PROBLEM), BUT BOTH
PLAYS WOULD HAVE TO BE SEEN.

9. BUTROVA PLEASED WITH CHOICE OF "DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS"
AND MENTIONED " WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE" IN LATE FORTIES
BY FAMOUS SOVIET ACTRESS (KONAN -- SPELLING UNCERTAIN)
IN KAMERNIY THEATER. MAJOR CLASSICAL DRAMA THEATER
(MXAT) ALSO PLANNING PRODUCTION FOR NEXT SEASON.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOSCOW04206
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750107-0453
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750310/aaaaails.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION CU
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 62306, 75 MOSCOW 2940
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <24 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS (CU/ARTS): DRAMA GROUP FOR 1975
TAGS: OEXC, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006